all my dances

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all my dances

by sumsflowers

Summary

“Will you dance with me?”

“Here?” he asks teasingly, knowing damn well if she said yes, he’d do it in a heartbeat.

“Uh,” Samira glances around, wrinkling her nose. “No. Later. When it’s just you and me.”

“It’s just you and me right now,” he says, grinning mischievously as his fingers slip into her curls, lightly massaging her scalp.

“Jack,” she huffs with a roll of her eyes while leaning back into his touch, though the corners of her lips twitch with a smile. “I’d rather our first slow dance not be next to a toilet.”

//

Or, in which being in a relationship without anyone's knowledge is a little harder for Samira than it is for Jack, surprisingly.

Notes

bruh i hate writing summaries whatever! anyway! i started writing this like a week ago and then got bored and then started writing it again yesterday and ta-da over 12k words later here we are. i hope it doesn't suck :D

See the end of the work for more notes

Someone is flirting with his girlfriend.

Jack Abbot doesn't have a sixth sense for these kinds of things—even if said girlfriend is convinced that he does—and he doesn't need to, not when he can see aforementioned flirtation unfolding in front of his very eyes. The primal, neanderthal part of him that still exists in the recesses of his being tries to overwhelm him with the urge to stride across the room and stake his claim like some possessive motherfucker, but embarrassing Samira Mohan with his ridiculous behavior is not on the top of his list, thank you very much.

So instead, Jack remains by the bar, leaning back with his elbow resting on the glass countertop, his other hand gripping the glass of scotch as he steadily watches the scene before him.

He vaguely recognizes the kid—okay, *man* —trying to charm Samira where they stand by one of the tables, the others in the group consisting of doctors King, Santos, and Whitaker. The man talking Samira's ear off is Dana's nephew, or godson. One of the two. Doesn't matter. Either way, it would be in bad form for Jack to stride over and sweep Samira away without the rest of the room wondering about his sanity.

"You look like you're in deep thought." He doesn't startle when the woman of the hour slides up next to him. Dana, truly, looks gorgeous in the knee length baby blue dress she's wearing, a compromise, he knows, she made with her daughters who wanted their mother to dress in a more traditional wedding color. " *My own daughters want me to wear white like I'm some sanctimonious virgin* ," Dana had said with a bark of laughter, a few weeks prior when the preparations were underway.

Now, Dana waves at the bartender for a drink, leaning on her elbow as she faces Jack. "You doing alright?"

She's been on his case for the last few months, despite his reassurances that everything was alright. More than alright. Fucking fantastic, actually. But the second Dana clocked that he was no longer wearing his wedding ring, she had started checking in on him more than usual. As though he was going through some major life change, symbolized by him taking off the band he hasn't taken off in the near ten years ince Alice has been gone, and Dana doesn't want him to go through it alone.

Except he isn't. But he can't quite give Dana that reassurance.

Tearing his gaze away from Samira, despite the near impossibility of it, he shoots his friend a droll look. “We’re at your reception, Dana. Take a break from checking in on me, for Christ’s sake.” His voice holds no heat, just bemusement before he takes a sip of his drink.

Dana smiles, the kind that makes him sometimes think she knows more than she’s letting on. He’s pretty sure she doesn’t know about *this* . At least 97 percent sure. “I can multitask,” she replies simply and Jack rolls his eyes because, really, he should know better. If anyone can read him—and Robby—like a book, it’s Dana Evans.

He does wish, though, she’d put him out of her mind and enjoy today. For her thirtieth wedding anniversary, Dana and her husband, Benji, had a vow renewal ceremony. “ *Needed to remind him just how long he’s stuck with me,* ” she had joked. The ceremony itself was only for them and their daughters, but the girls had decided on a reception to invite all friends and family for a celebration. Almost everyone Dana worked closely with at PTMC is in attendance.

It’s a lovely concept, he has to admit. One that he and Alice had thought of doing for their twentieth anniversary, except, of course, the universe had different plans for them. She’s been gone longer than they were married, a bitter truth that he often had trouble swallowing. But over the course of the last year, with a shit ton of therapy under his belt and a new reason to live that wasn’t just heavily relied on saving lives, her loss doesn’t knock the air out of his lungs like it used to.

Missing Alice has turned into a dull ache now, not as painful as it once was. For a long time, missing her came with a sense of longing; he missed her, of course, but he also missed that intimate companionship. A partner. Someone to come home to, spend his days off with so he isn’t passing time by listening to the police scanner or the news for some inkling that he may become useful once again and can do it at the hospital. He was lonely, he can admit.

Now, not so much. Not at all, really.

“I’m great, Dana,” he tells her with a fond sense of exasperation. His words only hold a thread of a lie—he’d truly be great if her nephew—godson?—would stop flirting with his girlfriend. Jack can’t blame the kid; Samira is, arguably, the most beautiful woman in the room. Three months in, and Jack still finds himself shell-shocked every now and then that she’s decided to spend her time with an old coot like him. “I’m having a drink, I teared up at your kids’ speeches, and I might

even dance a little." For one song, maybe, if he can get away with slow dancing with his girlfriend without people side-eyeing them.

His girlfriend . He has a distinct feeling he's a little obsessed with saying that, even in his own head. An almost childish, boyish kind of joy he hasn't felt in decades, maybe. He has to resist the urge to smile at the mere thought of her—an impossible feat, really.

Samira came into his life unexpectedly, yet seamlessly. As if she always belongs right here with him. What started off as a drumming anticipation of working the occasional same shift together, or seeing her during shift change and handing off more of his interesting cases to her rather than Robby—which, to be sure, Robby has definitely noticed—turned into exchanging case studies and articles through emails, discussing them over breakfast when they were both coming off night shift because it was far less formal than dinner and a little more innocent than it was.

Then she crept into his every thought; a flash of deep brown eyes framed with long eyelashes, a wide simple that showed off pretty teeth and prettier dimples, and the mere image of her became a high unlike any other. So not only was he enamored by her skills as a doctor, her quick thinking and thirst for knowledge, but then she would smile at him or laugh at one of his dry jokes that flew over most people's heads, and Jack realized, very soon, he was fucked. He doesn't mind it in the least.

Then came Robby's annual barbecue for the Pitt Crew towards the middle of May. She had been in a dress—God, that dress—and he had offered a ride home until the tension finally snapped and he took them to an empty Goddamn parking garage and he fucked her in his truck because neither of them could wait until they reached either of their homes.

He's been at her mercy ever since. (Well, since before then but—semantics).

"Oh, yeah?" Dana asks, eyebrows rising with a grin. "Gonna save me a dance?"

Jack shoots her a smile of his own as the bartender slides her the drink. "You got it," he promises. And then when he sees from his peripheral that the guy is showing Samira something on his phone and because Jack has a view of her perfect face, he notes that she's definitely just placating the guy. He briefly thinks if he *should* go in

and rescue her, but instead asks Dana, “Is that your nephew?” while vaguely gesturing to the man with the hand that holds his glass.

Dana follows his line of vision and scoffs out a laugh. “Godson.” Eh, it was a 50/50 chance he’d get it right. “Max. Why?”

Jack feels her curious gaze on his profile and he smartly tears his gaze from Samira lest he gives Dana something to think about. He just shrugs, his expression as easygoing as his tone as he replies, “Just wondering.”

Dana hums and he watches as she looks back at where Samira’s standing, and the corner of her mouth tips up. “He seems to have taken a liking to Samira,” she comments idly, taking a sip. “Not that I blame him. She’s a catch.”

Jack is well the fuck aware.

That familiar spark of envy burns as he takes a long sip but he knows, sharply, that the jealousy isn’t that Max is flirting with Samira, per se. Jack is fully confident and secure in his relationship with Samira to know that he has nothing to worry about. The jealousy, in truth, is borne from the fact that *Max* is able to openly flirt with Samira and Jack *can’t* —even though *he’s* the one in a relationship with her. It’s a cruel hand to be dealt, to be able to be with a woman like her and not express his feelings whenever the hell he wants.

“Too bad she doesn’t look interested,” Dana further adds, pulling Jack out of his thoughts. He looks to his friend and sees the amused look dancing across her features, but she’s looking at Samira and Max.

Jack follows and presses his teeth together to suppress the smug smile threatening to grow like an asshole, watching as Samira shifts closer to Santos and engages in a conversation that involves all of them, seemingly, and not just limited to her and Max. Jack raises his glass once more, his next sip far more leisurely. “Too bad,” he echoes in a murmur before taking the sip, hiding his smirk.

As though feeling their gazes on her, Samira looks up from where she stands on the opposite end of the terrace. The weather is gorgeous for an outdoor event on his hotel’s terrace, string lights and sconces giving an ambient glow to the area. A gentle breeze swayed through hair and flirted with the hems of some women’s dresses, though Jack’s eyes only tracked the way the wind interacted with Samira.

Who, now, has excused herself from the group and is walking this

way, and Jack is hopeless to look away. And why would he? Looking at Samira means admiring the slip of a dress she has on; a satin number that looks like liquid gold against her brown skin, the neckline just shy of deep with thin straps he wants to get his teeth on. Her makeup is simple yet brings out her dark eyes, her lips a glossy plum color and hair in artful curls his fingers itch to run through. The dress goes down to her feet, clad in heels, but there's a delicious slit that runs up her right leg that drives him crazy.

Jack is also painfully aware of how low the dress is from behind, straps criss-crossing over her back in a way that he is sure was created solely to torture him.

She is a fucking vision, goddess divine, and he has to resist every cell in his body from forcing him to drop to his knees at her feet.

Those brilliant eyes lock with his as she nears and Jack easily sees the subtle flare of them, her silent way of telling him he's *staring* . It's a look he's often at the receiving end of when they're on the same shift —one that is also often accompanied by a pretty, faint pink coloring Samira's cheeks before they both refocus on the work at hand. It's not his fault. If she wants him to stop staring, she needs to not be beautiful even under the harsh fluorescent lights of the hospital. (An impossible achievement for her, to be sure).

"Enjoying yourself, kid?" Dana asks Samira once she's within earshot over the music playing from the DJ's speakers.

Samira smiles, her dimple punching him in the gut. "I should be asking you that," she replies easily, eyes on Dana. But Jack knows she can feel his gaze on her, as always. He sees it in the way the tendons in neck tense, just briefly, as a reaction to the weight of his stare. "Your girls did an amazing job, putting this together," Samira adds, her dark eyes glancing around and Jack admires the sharp line of her jaw, the way her cheekbone glitters with her makeup.

"Yeah, there was no holding them back," Dana says with a chuckle, though her eyes shine with appreciation and love. "Speaking of which —I'm being summoned."

Both Jack and Samira follow her gaze to where her older daughter is waving her over, standing by who, Jack learned, is her boyfriend as well as Benji. Dana gives Jack and Samira a parting smile, leaving the two of them alone. Or, well, as alone as they can be on a terrace full of people. He watches the subtle bounce of her curls as she moves

towards the bar, right next to him, without sparing him a glance. He has to fight his grin.

“I think your staring problem has gotten worse, if that’s possible,” she comments mildly as she folds her arms on top of the bar, catching the bartender’s attention. “G&T, please.” Jack’s eyes track her movements and he presses his tongue to the roof of his mouth at her exposed back, those flimsy criss-crossing wires teasing the hell out of him. His lips tingle with the urge to press open mouthed kisses down her spine. *Later* . It’s a promise he *will* be seeing through. Samira glances over at him as the bartender makes her drink, arching an eyebrow at Jack. “The art of subtlety is lost on you.”

Jack can’t stop the grin from spreading. He stays in his position, leaning back against the bar. Raising an eyebrow in return, Jack takes a quick survey of the area, decides that no one is paying attention to them, and runs his gaze down the length of Samira’s body. She watches him watch her, taking his time to appreciate every dip and curve, knowing exactly what beauty lies under that stunning dress. The mere sight of her has blood rushing south, inconvenient given where they are, but unsurprising. When he meets her eyes, the heat he feels in his veins is reflected in those dark irises, along with a smug sense of amusement because, yeah, she’s right. Nothing subtle here.

“Forgive me if I like to appreciate beauty when it’s right in front of me,” he says quietly, just as the bartender drops off her drink. Jack watches her drink, admiring the elegant column of her throat work with the swallow. His blood simmers with want.

Samira lets go of the straw from between her teeth, lighting gripping it between her fingers as a huff of a laugh escapes. She merely shakes her head in amusement, even as her cheeks seem to pinken a little bit more. Jack’s curiosity gets the best of him as he asks, “So what was Max talking to you about?”

Samira’s gaze slides back to meet his gaze, unimpressed. Jack merely raises an eyebrow in return, even as he recalls his earlier jealousy. Some of it still lingers, burning deep in his chest. Samira’s dark eyes search his face and Jack quickly came to the realization, perhaps even before they started seeing each other, that Samira is able to read him effortlessly. Partly because he’s allowed himself to be more open with her, but also because she just *knows* . She’s a brilliant woman, after all.

“He’s harmless,” Samira answers.

The corner of Jack's mouth twitches, tongue pressing to the inside of his cheek. Across the terrace, he sees Dana and Benji pose for pictures with Robby and Heather. Jack distantly wonders if the two of them will ever figure their shit out. "I think you mean enamored," Jack says. Just a hint of an edge in his voice.

Samira, of course, picks up on it immediately. She straightens, her head doing an inquisitive tilt that gives Jack the feeling she can see right through him. He no longer shies away from it, lets her see all of him. She wouldn't be here if he had scared her away. The truth of it warms some of that chilling envy and he resists the urge to roll his shoulders which have tensed up without him really noticing.

"Jack," she murmurs quietly, so much put into just his name that it makes his heart clench. He tightens his grip on the glass, watching her hold herself back from stepping closer. These last few months have been spent memorizing the way the other carries themselves, growing more and more attuned to their bodies existing around one another. It has helped them when they work together on a trauma patient, and it helps them now, too, with Samira easily picking up on the tension in his shoulders and him seeing her own muscles tighten, physically stopping herself from moving closer.

"There's no reason for you to be jealous, you know," she reminds him. The gentle breeze has a strand of curly hair dancing along her cheekbone and his fingers itch with the urge to brush it back behind her ear.

Jack releases a quiet scoff. "I beg to differ, actually," he says matter-of-factly. From the corner of his eye, he sees the DJ reach for the microphone. "Some man can happily flirt with my girlfriend when I can't even do that without raising eyebrows."

Samira's lips turn downwards, her eyes flashing with understanding empathy and, fuck, Jack knows she gets it. Neither of them can acknowledge each other as anything other than coworkers in front of their other colleagues. Friends, maybe, but always with the modicum of respect that a resident would show her attending. And while they both respect the hell out of each other, there is so much more between them that they can't share outside the privacy of their own homes, or whenever they're sure their colleagues aren't around.

Jack knows, truthfully, that if Dana or Robby were to find out about them, it wouldn't be a big deal. Or, well, Robby will probably give him shit and threaten him if he ever hurt Samira—which, one, Jack

can see Robby doing because no matter how much both Robby and Samira deny it, there *is* a father-daughter relationship there that is obvious to everyone but them. Two, Samira is still a resident and there's a lot to be said about power differentials and a whole headache with HR—which, the more people who know about them, the more difficult it would be to keep things low profile.

Plus, reporting to HR would mean they wouldn't be able to work the same shift where the ED needs to report to him, and Jack and Samira enjoy working together too much to give that up. So, yes, secrets and running around behind everyone's backs is their new normal. For now, at least.

That doesn't mean Jack can't fucking hate it when he can't even hold her hand when they're all outside of the hospital like this.

Before Samira can say anything, though, the DJ cuts the music and tells everyone to find their seats as food is about to be served. This, Jack looks forward to, because as the powers that be would have it, he and Samira are seated next to each other at a table, shared by Robby, Heather, Frank, and Cassie.

When they reach the round table where the others are already sitting, Jack doesn't think twice in pulling Samira's chair out for her. She gives him a small, knowing smile, her eyes glimmering as she sits, hitting him with a whiff of her perfume, along with that familiar undertone of coconut that's always clinging to her. If Robby shoots him an almost puzzled look, Jack promptly ignores it as he settles in his own seat between him and Samira.

As the waitstaff brings out the plates, all picked by guests for their preference on the online RSVP, Frank glances around them and raises his eyebrows. "Are we one of the coworkers-slash-friends tables or the singles table?" he asks dryly.

Cassie snorts out a laugh while Jack arches an eyebrow, undoing the button of his suit jacket so it can fall open. To his right, Robby throws Frank an exasperated look while Heather merely purses her lips and Jack has the distinct feeling she's avoiding making eye contact with Robby.

Jack, however, presses his tongue to the back of his teeth, stopping himself from saying that there are two people at this table that are *not* single and, as though she can read his fucking mind, Samira subtly bumps her knee against his under the table, hidden by the tablecloth.

So he stays quiet while Cassie shrugs. “Maybe both,” she says to Frank with a bemused smile.

Well, Jack is very happily *not* single, but he’ll keep that to himself. As per usual.

Their food is served and the DJ lowers the volume of the music, letting it play in the background as a low murmur carries over the terrace from the guests. “It’s pretty sweet, though,” Jack hears Cassie say as he cuts off a piece of his lemon pepper chicken. Glancing up from his plate, he sees her smiling in the direction of where Dana is sitting with Benji, their daughters, and some other close family members. “Vow renewal on their thirtieth anniversary?” she whistles quietly. “I barely made it to ten.”

“Fifteen,” Jack finds himself supplying, reaching for his scotch.

Across the table, Frank scoffs. “Five,” he says, only a hint of bitterness in his voice.

Jack sees Heather and Samira exchange a look before Heather huffs out a breath. “Now this is the Debbie-Downer table, I’d say,” she mutters, not so under her breath as she shoots the three of them a pointed look.

Jack’s lips merely twitch into a smile as he eats, glancing at Samira from the corner of his eye. She seems to be suppressing an exasperated smile of her own as she stabs some roasted vegetables and eats. And Jack can’t help himself—truthfully, he thinks he’s lasted a lot longer than he thought he would—his left hand finds Samira’s thigh under the table.

They’re tucked in far enough and the tablecloth is long enough to keep his action hidden, but he sees Samira’s grip on her fork tighten as Jack slips his hand under the slit of her dress and rests it against her thigh, skin to skin. He adjusts his hand so it’s more or less splayed on the smooth, soft flesh of her inner thigh, and he has to take a long sip of his drink when he feels the heat between her legs.

He feels Samira clench her legs together, trapping his hand and keeping it from moving further up, which he knows is why she did it. Samira knows him well; she knows that despite where they are, who they’re with, he has no qualms in teasing her with just his fingers. But she doesn’t trust herself not to react, so he won’t push her. Not yet, anyway. For now, he will enjoy her skin beneath his after itching to touch her since they arrived here—separately—and the goosebumps

he is sure are breaking across her arms in response to his thumb idly rubbing her soft flesh.

Really. She should've known better than to expect him to keep his hands to himself the *entire* time they're at the reception. He's only human, after all.

"Samira, you're on night shift again next week, right?" Heather asks.

Samira is a pro at not looking at Jack. He has to fight another grin. "Yeah."

To Jack's right, Robby scoffs, bringing his glass of bourbon up. Right before he takes a sip, he raises his eyebrows at Jack, lifting his index finger off the glass to point it in his direction. "That's 'cause Jack's trying to poach her."

Samira pauses in bringing her next bite up to her mouth, the fork halfway to her mouth as her slightly widened eyes look at Robby before flicking over at Jack—he sees a flash of warning—before looking back at Robby. "It's only been a couple of shifts," she tries to deflect with a nervous sort of chuckle that Jack finds too fucking endearing.

He looks directly at Robby as he says bluntly, "Damn right, I'm trying to poach her."

Samira's left hand promptly sneaks under the table and she gives his wrist a warning squeeze. Jack only tightens his grip on her thigh, his expression stoic as Robby shakes his head. "Brother, don't even think about it."

"You've got every resident at this table and the med students at the next table. You can't spare one?" Never mind the fact that the resident he wants is the best one, in his professionally unbiased and personally biased opinion. Under the table, Samira squeezes his wrist again—softer, this time—before letting go.

He knows Samira likes working days; it gives her a sense of normalcy in her otherwise hectic schedule to come home when the sun is setting and sleep during the night. It's the opposite of how Jack was; unable to find sleep during the night because he was often plagued with PTSD induced nightmares, so he would just stay up listening to the police scanner—if it ever went missing, he knew his therapist was to blame—just to keep himself busy. Just so he isn't sitting in the confines of his home, alone with nothing but the scanner to keep him company,

and letting himself think too deeply about how. . . Lonely all of it is.

At least at work, he is surrounded by people. At work, he is helping, he is useful.

Except now, when he isn't working nights, he has someone to spend his time with. He is no longer left alone with his thoughts for too long or too often. Him and Samira—they are the same, and though it took them a while to realize the truth of it, he is so fucking grateful that they did. No matter what their schedules are, whether they see each other for a few days consecutively or if they are two ships passing in the night, they make the most of it. They look forward to the next time they're together, because now they know there's someone waiting for them. It's a new reality that took some time for Jack to adjust to, but now that he has, he never wants to let it go.

So, yeah. If he can get Samira to work some night shifts and he no longer grumbles about having to do his mandatory day shift rotations —in fact, he's always looking for an excuse to work with her in the daylight—then they're better for it. They're both workaholics still, to be sure, as that's a habit that will take some time to break out of. But they also hold each other accountable. They are familiar enough with one another to know when the other needs to slow down, take a breath.

They make each other better doctors, absolutely. But they also help each other be better humans, at the base of it all.

His therapist has been thrilled at the progress Jack has shown since he and Samira started seeing each other. Jack had thanked Samira by going down on her, of course. Repeatedly.

"Or you can just make the permanent switch to days and get all of us," Robby says in a tone that reminds Jack they've had many versions of this conversation, many times.

Jack, though, doesn't want anything to jeopardize his relationship with Samira, and being permanently on the same shift before she's an attending might be an HR mess that neither of them wants to deal with.

Heather raises an eyebrow at him. "And leave John as the senior attending for night shift?" she asks dryly, giving Robby a look that says she already knows the answer.

Robby releases a long suffering sigh. He looks back at Jack. "Don't

poach my resident."

Jack's thumb remains swiping along her thigh. From his peripheral, she sees her watch this conversation unfold like a tennis match. To Robby, he says, "You can't tell me what to do."

Robby looks bewildered. "I'm the head of the department. It's literally my job to tell you what to do," he points out while the table erupts in laughter.

The sound of Samira's laugh has Jack's chest tightening and, fuck, it takes every fiber of his willpower to not turn towards her just so he can admire the dimples he knows are framing her brilliant smile, or the bright glimmer in her dark eyes. He will never get tired of hearing her laugh, will easily spend the rest of his days trying to get her to make that sound over and over again. He wonders if she's aware of just how much power she holds over him.

She has him in the palm of her hand, and Jack is fairly certain she has no idea.

Case in point: he's unable to keep his hand off of her. If he could, he'd be rubbing her thigh up and down, but the movement of his arm would be too obvious to the others. So it's just his thumb that moves, even if his fingers are drawn to the wet heat higher up between her legs. His blood threatens to melt into liquid fire at the mere idea of brushing his fingers against her panties, but he keeps himself in check. For both of their sakes.

There's a ballad playing that Jack doesn't know the name of. But it's slow and romantic—and a man who is decidedly *not* Jack is trying to dance with *his* girlfriend.

Jack, sitting with Robby, allowed his gaze to wander over to the dance floor every now and then to watch Samira dance with the other residents and med students. With the lights making her skin glow and her smile wide and dimpled, it's impossible to get him to look away. The DJ, for the most part, had been playing upbeat music that pounded through the speakers a little too loudly, making Jack miss the controlled chaos of the ED, but all thoughts fizzle out of his brain every time he catches sight of Samira dancing.

It had started off as carefree, half-jumping/half-dancing with her coworkers. But then the music started to change, people started breaking off into couples, and Jack had clocked Dana's damn godson

making his way through the crowd before Samira did. And then Santos had practically shoved Samira in Max's arms for the slow dance, and Jack is petty enough to decide right then and there he's going to make Santos's next night shift stint hell. Probably.

But then Samira says something to Max while her right hand closes around Donnie's arm, her smile fake and forced and Jack yearns for the real thing as he watches Samira, no doubt, tell Max that she already is dancing with someone. Donnie, bless him, looks bewildered but doesn't seem to throw Samira under the bus, and Jack feels himself relax when Donnie pulls her away from Max so they can dance.

Jack doesn't even realize he's glaring at Max, who Jack catches rolling his eyes before turning his attention elsewhere, until his view is obscured and his expression flattens when Dana appears in front of him, wiggling her fingers. "Let's go. You owe me a dance." Robby snickers next to him as Jack slaps his hand against Dana's and lets her pull him up. Dana shoots Robby a look. "You're next, Cap."

"Ooh, I don't dance," Robby says with raised eyebrows and a shake of his head.

Looping her arm with Jack's, Dana throws over her shoulder, "You do today," before she and Jack approach the makeshift dance floor.

For his comfort, Dana doesn't pull them towards the middle, and instead they stay at the perimeter of the crowd, one hand on her upper back and the other holding hers. And as they sway to the song, Jack's gaze is directed right over Dana's blonde head to where Samira dances with Donnie and that twist of envy is still present, despite the fact that Jack knows this is Donnie and he trusts him. Jealousy is a fickle, sometimes unreasonable emotion that he is reacquainting himself with, and as much as Jack adores Dana, she's not who Jack truly wants to dance with.

As if reading his thoughts, Samira's gaze flickers to him, dark brown eyes meeting lighter ones over Donnie's shoulder, and he sees the friendly smile she had on her face while chatting with Donnie fade. The string lights over their heads glow against her skin, shining against her eyes that churn with so much emotion it kicks Jack's right in his chest. While Jack doesn't have to keep an eye on Donnie—he's probably one of the best guys around, in Jack's opinion—he now can't stop watching Samira—unsurprising. Except worry creeps in, washing away his initial jealousy of everyone and their damn mother being

able to dance with Samira except for him, and he watches as Samira wipes away the look she was just wearing and replaces it with a fake smile he can't stomach.

"You alright there, Jack?" Dana's voice, softened with concern, tries for his attention.

Right at that moment, Samira breaks eye contact with him, other moving bodies filling the space between them, and Jack's throat works as he fights his frown, looking down at Dana. She's watching him worriedly, curiously. When Jack realizes to smooth out his expression, he concludes quickly that resisting the urge to frown had been a lost battle, which explains Dana watching him warily. A look they'd give to a thrashing patient, he distinctly realizes.

"Yes, yeah." He gives a stiff nod, trying to relax his facial muscles despite the tension weaving through them. He doesn't like that look in Samira's eyes, like she's locked in a fight with herself and *both* sides are losing. A helpless sort of frustration. Jack's body buzzes with the urge to go to her, but Donnie gives her a spin and her smile is a little more real, and it eases some of the tightness in Jack's test. Not enough, though. To Dana, he says, "Your girls know how to throw a hell of a party."

Dana raises an eyebrow, giving him that look that tells him she knows he's trying to deflect and change the subject. Not that he can tell her the truth, anyway. That his girlfriend's eyes are sad and it's wrecking him inside and all he wants to do is hold her, prying eyes be damned. But Jack is a helper, a fixer. He hates feeling useless and right now, that feeling has multiplied tenfold where Samira is concerned.

It feels fucking unnatural not to go to her and make sure she's okay. But after long, thorough conversations when they first started dating, they had mutually decided to keep things under wraps. Samira had a little bit of her residency left, and neither she nor Jack wanted anything to potentially jeopardize it by allowing PTMC's HR to get their claws into their relationship. If the two of them decided to tell a select few people about their relationship, then that's another conversation to be had. And since they haven't had it yet, Jack knows, per their agreement, he can't just swoop in to make sure she's okay. Not without setting off the hospital rumor mill—and there are far too many of their coworkers here to risk that.

Yet, his muscles are tight and skin fucking *buzzes* with the need to be close to her, to check in on her. She may be laughing with Donnie

right now, but Jack knows all of her smiles. Has become an expert on them in the months they began toeing the line between coworkers to friends to something more. Every single one of her smiles are beautiful, easily capable of robbing Jack of his breath—even the one she wears right now that doesn't quite reach her eyes.

The song only lasts a couple of minutes, though they seem to drag, but Jack sees the second the song comes to an end, Samira shoots Donnie a quick smile before making her way through the crowd. Their eyes meet for a flash and he recognizes the look— *I need a minute but not alone.* A signal they've perfected over the last couple of months that they found themselves using when working the same shift and things felt too much, too fast, and they needed a breather but didn't want to be alone. They'd find each other in a supply closet or empty room or stairwell. Anything to have a moment alone and find peace in the chaos—and finding it in each other.

"Thanks for the dance," Dana says, squeezing his arm with a smile that tells him she knows too much. Jack would be the least bit surprised to find out if Dana knows about him and Samira; the woman sees every-fucking-thing.

So Jack smiles at her, says, "Anytime," and means it before he walks across the terrace towards the glass doors that lead inside the hotel, where he had seen Samira disappear.

Truthfully, maybe he could have been more discreet about it, but all of his focus is on getting to her and making sure she's alright. The fifth floor of the hotel doesn't have a lot of foot traffic, other than the occasional member of the waitstaff fluttering about with trays in their hands. Jack's hand grazes along the wooden bannister, glancing down towards the floors below him just as his phone buzzes in his suit jacket's pocket.

Samira — 6:43PM

Family bathroom.

He makes a beeline for the bathrooms, following the signs. They're on the opposite side of the floor, the sounds of the party growing distant as Jack moves across the carpeted floor quickly. He has to make a right and then a left before moving towards the end of the hall where he spots the three bathroom doors. Passing the ladies' room and men's room, Jack attempts to will some of the tension in his chest away as he knocks on the larger family bathroom door.

Jack bows his head, clocking the empty hallway before he says quietly, “Let me in, Samira.”

The door unlocks and is pulled open a moment later, and Jack is greeted with the sight of Samira leaning into the space between the door and the doorframe. He’s fucking *relieved* to realize she hasn’t been crying, that ball of tension deflating a bit with a rough exhale. But there’s a heaviness in her dark eyes, her lips—a faded plum now—twisting to the side as she looks at him from under long eyelashes.

“I feel ridiculous,” is how she greets him, opening the door wider and turning to walk further into the bathroom with a sigh.

Jack’s eyebrows furrow together as he follows her in, locking the door behind them. The bathroom is spacious, if a little odd in its layout. There’s a single stall to the right, separated from the sink to the left and along the wall opposite of the door is a wine colored chaise lounge. It’s clean and dimly lit with nonsensical patterns on the tiles, but Jack’s focus is on Samira as she paces in front of the chaise, her heels clicking against the tiled floors.

She looks restless, hands on her hips as she shakes her head, curls bouncing and earrings swinging. As much as Jack wants to move towards her, he stays where he is, chin lifting and hands idly behind his back despite the tightness lacing through his shoulders. A soldier, ready for battle—or whatever is going on with his girl. He’s seen Samira this way on occasion; when she’s moments away from an adrenaline crash after a particularly brutal shift, or when she’s worked up about something and is searching for the right words to convey it even when her body, restless and constantly moving, is itching to let it all out.

The best thing to do is for her to let it all out, and once she’s coming down, Jack knows his place next to her, reminding her that it’s okay to be human and to let herself feel the unavoidable effect of that.

“I know what we agreed to,” Samira starts, still pacing with her tone tight with barely contained frustration. He half wonders if she’s just talking out loud to herself, but he watches and listens anyway, of course. “On an intellectual level, I *understand* it and I stand by it, but, fuck, I just—” She stops to face him, cutting off the clicks of her heels, only about four feet or so of space between them as her dark brown eyes lock with his. Jack watches some of the annoyance melt away, replaced by something dangerously close to defeat as her shoulders slump and arms drop to her side. “I wanted to dance with *you* .” Her

voice is softer when she says this, catching on the last word, and Jack swears his heart launches itself to his throat at the utter unhappiness that heavies her voice.

And, oh, it does something devastating to his heart, seeing the downturned corners of her lips, the way her eyes shine with emotion that she's trying to blink back. Jack can't hold himself back any longer; he moves towards her, Samira's eyes never leaving his as he closes the distance between them. He can smell her perfume, her coconut scent, the two of them nearly eye level with her heels as he takes her hands in his.

"Samira," he says quietly, her name a gentle prayer and answer all in one. She takes in a deep breath, lips pressing together and he knows it's because she's trying to contain the slight quiver of her chin. Jack's stomach tightens at the sight of her like this. The two of them are used to keeping things under wraps when they're at work, because there's rarely ever a moment to be anything but doctors. But in moments like this, outside of work but surrounded by people they work with—it's difficult to remember that they can't be *them* , no matter how badly they want to.

He gives her a small smile, lacing their hands together, reveling in the softness of her skin against his. Dipping his chin, Jack makes sure she's looking into his eyes, really *hearing* him, as he says, "I wanted to dance with you too, honey." He wants to dance all of his dances with her, whether he's got the feet for it or not.

He's about to make a lighthearted remark to ease some of the tension when Samira takes one look at him and squeezes his hands. "Do *not* make a joke about your foot right now," she says, and she's trying to be stern, he knows, but there's a hint of laughter in her voice and maybe he's won, just a little bit. Jack smiles, unapologetic, and that's all it takes for a huff of a laugh to escape Samira as she closes her eyes and shakes her head, fondly exasperated, and leans into him for a hug he's more than ready for.

Samira sighs against him, resting her temple against his shoulder and lets go of his hands so she can wind her arms around his waist under his suit jacket. He leans his face against her forehead, her curls tickling him delightfully as his arms cage her in, wrapping around her shoulders, feeling the heat of her skin through his clothes as he lets his eyes fall shut while reveling in the closeness he'd been craving all fucking day.

The moment he has her in his arms, the rest of the world fades away.

Jack relaxes against her, blowing out a slow breath as his thumb draws nonsensical shapes on the exposed blade of her shoulder. Reason is a nagging voice in the back of his head, telling him they can't stay here for too long, but Jack expertly shoves it aside, silencing it in favor of turning his head towards her and burying his nose in her hair.

He inhales deeply, coconut and vanilla and the floral tinge of her perfume hitting him, and he squeezes her closer, savoring the shape of her against him. "You smell good," he murmurs.

"So do you," she returns with a hum, decidedly more relaxed now. "Are you sure we can't just stay here?"

His lips twitch with a smile. "Not unless you want people to start asking questions."

"Maybe we Irish goodbye'd it out of there. Separately, of course."

Jack hums lowly. "Isn't your purse still at the table?"

A pause, then a heavy sigh. "God damn it."

Jack chuckles, pressing a kiss to the top of her head before pulling back, his hands gently cupping her cheeks to get her to look up at him. He's relieved to see her calmer, less tense. Her eyelashes flutter, lazy gaze dipping to his lips that curl up in a subtle yet knowing smile. "Hi," he mumbles, admiring the glow of her cheeks, the length of her dark lashes. She's got kohl on her waterline, making her eyes pop.

He feels her fingers interlace at his back. "Hi," Samira returns softly. "Will you dance with me?"

"Here?" he asks teasingly, knowing damn well if she said yes, he'd do it in a heartbeat.

"Uh," Samira glances around, wrinkling her nose. "No. Later. When it's just you and me."

"It's just you and me right now," he says, grinning mischievously as his fingers slip into her curls, lightly massaging her scalp.

"Jack," she huffs with a roll of her eyes while leaning back into his touch, though the corners of her lips twitch with a smile. "I'd rather

our first slow dance not be next to a toilet."

He bobs his head in a nod. "Fair point." He kisses the tip of her nose and asks, "Wanna go back out there?"

Samira sighs, not looking particularly thrilled. She glances at the door behind him before meeting his gaze and asking, "Can I get a kiss first?"

Jack breathes out a laugh, flooded with warm adoration. He'll give her anything she asks for. He responds to her by pulling her close and pressing his lips to hers in what's meant to be a chaste kiss. Except the moment his lips meat Samira's, Jack is hopeless to end it when Samira parts her lips under his and his tongue slips in, slowly sliding along hers and groaning quietly as he feels her grip tighten at the back of his shirt, pressing herself closer to him as liquid heat slides through his veins.

He feels her body against his, knowing every dip and curve like the back of his hand, and Samira's own hands slip under she's tucking them into the back pockets of his pants, pressing him closer. His hardening length presses against her thigh and she moans into the kiss, and it only serves to make him a little more insane. "Jack," she whimpers against him, a plea in the way she says his name.

"I know, baby," he says, kissing her and beginning to walk forward, an arm sliding around her waist so she doesn't trip on her feet as he blindly guides her towards the sink.

The material of her dress is cool and slippery under his touch and he's eager to slip it off of her, stopping when she's pressed against the edge of the counter. The heat between them is too explosive for just a kiss, even if it's unwise for anything more, but Samira's arm is loosely looped around his neck, keeping her close, and when he hoists her on the counter and his hands begin slipping under dress, skin to skin, Jack knows he isn't walking out of this place without making her come at *least* once.

As though reading his intentions, Samira's hands grab his forearms. "Wait," she gasps against him, pulling back a bit. She blinks quickly a few times, like she's attempting to snap herself out of the daze of the kiss. "Not on your knees. Your leg—"

Jack narrows his eyes at her, fingers digging into her thighs. "Don't start worrying about my leg when I'm five seconds away from burying my tongue in you."

Samira's cheeks flush at his blunt words, but her back straightens as a determined gleam narrows her eyes. Jack suppresses a sigh. He knows that look. "It won't be comfortable for you," she says, her voice a little less breathless. "And I can't come if you're uncomfortable."

He shoots her a roguish smirk. "Is that a challenge?" he asks, leaning in to chase her lips.

But Samira plants a hand on Jack's chest to stop him from coming any closer, raising her eyebrows before her gaze flickers to her left. Jack follows and huffs out a breath at the chaise that sits there. "How very convenient for you," he remarks dryly.

"It's convenient for *you* ," Samira insists, giving him a gentle push to get him to take a step back. He does, just barely, hands reluctantly pulling away from under her dress before settling on her hips as Samira slides off the counter and stands. She takes one of his hands in hers and pulls him along, throwing a smirk at him over her shoulder. "Better angle, too."

He tilts his head at that, assessing as she brings them to the chaise before turning Jack around, hands on his shoulders to push him down until he's seated before her. And, okay, maybe she's right—unsurprising, of course—because the chaise is a little lower than expected and as he looks up at Samira, he realizes, delightfully, that he's at perfect level with her pussy.

And Jack won't lie; he's been an amputee for some decades now, but to have Samira look after him in the simplest of ways does something indescribable to his chest. He can't quite explain it, but he knows it's a sensation restricted solely for Samira.

Jack's gaze darkens as his hands carefully bunch up her dress to lift it, every inch of exposed smooth brown skin making him hard behind the zipper of his pants and—scratch that. Samira was *definitely* right about this.

His mouth fucking waters at the sight of the nude underwear, the lace leaving very little to the imagination, though Jack is wonderfully aware of exactly what's underneath. Hunger rolls in his stomach at the wet spot on the fabric as Samira holds up the dress for him, her breathing already growing shallow as Jack's now free hands slide up the backs of her thighs, bringing her closer as his eyes flit up to watch her. She's already watching him, lips parted and the lipstick color faded from their kisses, as Jack presses a kiss to her center through the

damp material.

“Shit,” Samira hisses above him as he feels her thighs clench under his touch. “Don’t tease.”

Jack hums, lips curving up. “But it’s so much fun.” He chuckles roughly at the glare she tries to shoot him, because it looks more like helplessness than anything else.

He returns his attention to what’s in front of him, a hand rising to trail his finger along the thin band of her underwear, brushing over the tiny glittering metal butterflies on either hip. “These are definitely new,” Jack comments thoughtfully.

“Do *not* tear them.”

He grins wolfishly because, truly, the warning is warranted. Instead, he curls his fingers under the band and pulls the flimsy material down, his eyes on the revelation behind the underwear that drops around her ankles. “Fuck, honey,” Jack hisses at the sight of her, glistening from arousal even as he grasps her by the calf to lift her foot and pull the underwear away.

After he lifts her right foot next, once it’s free of the clothing, Jack brings her foot up and rests it on the chaise right next to him. One of Samira’s hands rests at the back of his neck while the other holds the dress up, and his blood simmers in his veins at the way her new stance opens her up for him.

Reasonably, Jack knows they don’t have much time, but that doesn’t stop him from turning his head towards her right thigh and trailing hot, open mouthed kisses along the flesh, soft yet firm from the hours she spends on her feet. His fingers brush up and down her calf towards the bend of her knee, making sure to scrape his facial hair along her skin in the wake of his kisses, just how she likes it, as he nears her cunt.

Despite his throbbing cock and desire to taste her, Jack switches over to the other thigh to give it the same treatment, and the feeling of Samira’s fingers tightening their grasp on his hair at the back of his head is predictable and welcome at the same time. “Don’t be mean.”

She’s trying to be firm, his sweet girl. But her voice is breathless and it shakes at the last word, and it only makes Jack’s smirk widen as he lifts his gaze up at her. Samira’s cheeks are already prettily flushed from want, dark eyes watching him with desperate impatience and the

look on her face alone is enough to fill Jack with a primal sort of male satisfaction. Knowing that *he's* the one who puts that look in her eyes, who makes her entire body clench with desire. That it's *his* name that falls like a prayer from the soft, full lips when he buries his tongue or fingers or cock inside of her.

It's the need to have her falling apart around him that has Jack giving into her, eyes locked with hers as he runs the flat of his tongue over her center. She gasps as the sweet, familiar taste of her arousal hits his tongue, his hands on her thighs and her fingers in his hair as he repeats the motion.

Jack groans at the taste of her and Samira's head falls back with a pleasured moan of her own as he licks through her folds, his fingers digging into her flesh to keep her close. "Oh, Jack, God— *yes* ," she breathes brokenly when his tongue flicks against her clit, tracing it with the tip of his tongue before sucking it into his mouth and feeling Samira jerk against him in response. "Oh— *Jesus* ."

He pulls away enough to press nip at the inner thigh of her raised leg, feeling her tremble just slightly. "You're gonna give me a complex."

Samira finds it in herself to scoff, moving her head to look down at him with glazed over eyes. "As if you don't have one already," she rasps.

Jack grins wickedly and Samira's throat bobs in response. "I like to think it's warranted," he remarks before he's back with his face between her legs and tongue buried deep inside her cunt.

Samira curses above him as his hands slide up to grip the soft, firm flesh of her ass, pulling her close as his lips and tongue work her open, pushing deep into her wet heat as Samira's grip in his hair tightens. His scalp stings, just lightly, just enough to make his blood boil with fierce desire that he has only ever felt for this woman.

He feels her hips move and he groans in approval, showing just as much attention to her clit. The sounds of him feasting on her, mixed with his deep groans and Samira's higher pitched moans, echo off the tiled walls of the bathroom, but the two of them are so lost in their blissful haze that they cannot bring themselves to care about anything else other than this.

Her nails scrape against his scalp and he drags his teeth along her clit in response, and then his name is a sharp cry from Samira's lips before he feels her fall apart above him. Jack doesn't stop, tongue and lips

moving as he tastes her release, lapping like he's dehydrated and she's the only source capable of quenching his thirst. Jack feels her legs shake as the wave subsides, her chest heaving with her heavy breaths and fiery smugness spreads through him at the sight of her stiff nipples peeking through the material of her dress, admiring the column of her throat with her head thrown back as she comes down from her high.

"You are unreal," Jack murmurs in reverence, lips and chin glistening as he reigns kisses along her inner thigh.

Samira looks down at him, dark eyes glazed over and voice breathless as she says, "I should be saying that to you." She pushes his hair back, her touch gentle. She grins, then, dimpled and lazy and a flash of white teeth. "Told you this was a better angle."

"You were right, of course," Jack concedes happily, carefully putting her foot down before he rises, barely any space between them as he stands. With her heels, he's still got an inch or so on her, and Jack brings both hands up to gently brush back the tendrils of dark curls that frame her face. Samira tilts her head back slightly, eyes heavy lidded and a drunken smile as his fingers move down to brush along her jaw. Unable to help himself, he kisses her and Samira opens up for him, moaning slightly as she no doubt tastes herself on his tongue. Her dress drops down her body as she grips the front of his shirt to keep him close.

He'll never get enough of this, he thinks. Feeling her melt into him, vulnerable in every way because of the trust that exists between them —Jack cannot remember the last time he has felt so needed, so wanted, by someone else other than within the walls of the hospital. Samira, though, holds onto him as if she's terrified he will disappear; but wild hellhounds wouldn't even be able to drag him away from her.

He feels her hand trail down and Jack groans deeply into their kiss when he feels her hand palm him through his pants, painfully hard and begging to be inside of her. "Fuck, baby," Jack grunts when Samira squeezes, feeling a jolt of electricity shoot through his veins in response. " *Now* can we go to the counter?"

Samira grins into the kiss. "Compromise is everything, I've heard," she replies teasingly before her other hand grips the front of his shirt and she pulls him forward.

Their lips never disconnected, the kiss growing into a frenzy of tongues and teeth as Samira brings them to the counter, Jack's hands on her ass because one, he loves it and two, to keep her from tripping. The counter is wide and long and once they get to it, Jack kneads her flesh through the dress and Samira chokes on a moan before asking, "Condom?"

Jack nips at her bottom lip. "Wallet."

Her hand slides into the back pocket of his pants, feeling her pull his wallet out. "Take your jacket off," she says when she pulls away from the kiss, opening his wallet to fish out the foil packets he's been keeping in there since they started seeing each other. He's fairly certain he didn't keep condoms in his wallet for over a decade until Samira. No reason to, until her.

His lips curl into a half smile as he listens to her, shrugging off his suit jacket and tossing it in the direction of the chaise, his eyes never leaving her because he sees the moment she catches the photograph that has found home in the little window pocket of his wallet. Jack stands, hands gripping the edge of the counter on either side of Samira as she turns the wallet vertically to look at the photo, realization dawning on her pretty features as her eyes widen a bit.

It was a picture she had taken on his phone, in his car. The camera pointed to the mirror on the passenger side sun visor, a dimpled smile on Samira's face. Her eyes were closed and cheek was tilted towards Jack, who was kissing the corner of her mouth, salt and pepper hair curling at his ears and his smile, hidden by the kiss, obvious by the crinkles at the corner of his eye. It was his favorite photo of them together because even with her eyes closed, the happiness on Samira's face was impossible to miss. Jack knows how happy she makes him; it's a fact as true as the earth is round. And he knows, logically, that he makes her happy, too, in all of the ways that matter. But seeing it in a photo like this—it tugs at something in Jack's heart that he thought was long gone until Samira Mohan came into his life.

"I—when. . ." Samira lets out a breathless chuckle, gaze lifting to look at him with those pretty, big brown eyes framed with long eyelashes. God, she was stunning. It hit him in the chest every fucking day with the realization she chose *him* . "When did you put this in here?"

Jack hums, nonchalant. "The day we took that photo," he answers honestly.

Samira blinks, lips parting. “We took this three days after we started dating.”

He smiles, unapologetically wild for her. “I know.”

She gapes at him for a heartbeat before closing the gap, pulling him in for a kiss that has Jack tightening his grip along the counter. The fire between them is explosive, as always, as Samira’s fingers deftly unbuckle his belt and slip it open before she reaches for the button and zipper of his pants. When she shoves them down, along with his boxer briefs, Samira’s hand wraps around his newly freed cock and Jack nearly comes undone right there. Her touch alone is enough to make him see stars, but his muscles scream with the need to be inside of her.

As if reading his thoughts, Samira pleads into the kiss, “Take me from behind, Jack.”

Fucking hell, the universe really did him a solid by putting him in her life.

Never one to deny Samira anything, he turns her around and Samira gathers her dress after giving him the condom, which he rolls on his record time with a grit of his teeth at how rigid with need his cock is. Jack’s gaze drops to Samira’s ass as she leans slightly over the sink, legs spread, and as he guides his cock to her entrance, his gaze lifts to hers, dancing with anticipation and desire, in the mirror. Their eyes lock right as he nudges the head between her folds, and Samira’s jaw slackens in a wanton moan as Jack, gripping her hips, pushes in with a deliberate, greedy thrust.

“Oh, my God,” Samira whines when he’s fully seated inside of her, every nerve ending in his body on fire in response to being surrounded by her heat, the familiarity of her walls closing around his cock. Jack’s pulse is concerningly rapid, but that’s to be expected as he buries himself inside Samira. Her head drops forward, dark hair hiding her away from him, and Jack clicks his tongue in disapproval.

“Let me see you, honey.” There’s a gentle command in his voice that does the trick, Samira lifting her head as if it weighs a ton, her breathing already coming in short pants. Their eyes meet in the mirror: hers, glazed on her way to being fucked out and his, utterly intoxicated by the sight of her. “There you are,” he murmurs before pulling out—and pounding right back in.

It pulls a sharp cry out of Samira and the sound is music to his ears as

he sets a rhythm that brews an electrical storm in his veins. The sound of skin slapping against skin joins in as Samira props an elbow on the counter, pressing her hand against her mouth to muffle the pretty sounds that escape and he would much rather hear it but knows the risk they're running here. If they were smart, they wouldn't be doing this at all, with so many of their friends and coworkers nearby.

But emotions always seem to trump logic—though, there is nothing illogical about how he feels for Samira.

His teeth grit, throat burning as he tamps down the groans threatening to escape, as his gaze drops to the point of their connection. Jack's lips part, teeth dragging along the back of his teeth as he admires the way the flesh of her ass ripples every time he pushes into her, skin against skin, his gaze trailing up to appreciate the line of her spine exposed by her dress.

He needs her closer.

Jack's hand slides around to her front, up the bunched fabric of her dress, up the valley of her breasts until his fingers and thumb grasp her jaw and he pulls her up. Samira rises with a gasp, her back to his front, head leaned back against his shoulder as Jack's hand splays around her throat, fingers at the sides. He drags his lips along her jaw, their eyes meeting in the reflection as he squeezes the sides of her throat in a way that has her arching into him.

"Jack," she breathes, her eyelashes fluttering as he moves in and out of her, slowing his pace to drag it out even if they can't afford it.

"I know, honey," he rasps and her parts lips are too inviting, his thumb shifting positions until he presses the pad of it to her bottom lip. Eyes on his, she opens her lips just enough so his thumb slips into her mouth and Jack's muscles tighten at the warmth of her mouth around his thumb as she sucks. Jack presses a kiss to the corner of her mouth, hips moving and he sees that look in her eyes, the way her lashes flutter and like she can't keep those brown eyes open for too long, and Jack knows she's close. "Yeah, I can feel you. You're gonna come, aren't you?"

His voice is deep and gruff with want, barely controlled restraint from staving off his own need to come until she falls apart first. The strap of her dress falls off her right shoulder, her hand still holding the dress up to the best of her ability, and Jack watches as she lifts her other hand until she rests it at the back of his head and her pleading

whimper is enough to get him to do as her eyes beg and presses his lips to hers.

It's barely a kiss, lips sliding together and sharing breath as Jack picks his rhythm up again and he swallows Samira's moan when he feels her fall apart, moments later, in his arms.

Jack watches their reflection; watches as she falls back into him, trusting him to hold her up as she muffles her sounds against his neck, her skin like it's one fire and Jack cannot, for the life of him, look away. She is fucking ethereal in his arms, skin glowing under the dim lighting of the bathroom, lips kissed and swollen and, fuck, she is everything he ever dreamed of and everything he doesn't deserve—but will spend the rest of his life trying to be worthy of.

He sees the bright beam of headlights through his living room window about twenty minutes after he gets home from the reception.

The air in his home is touched by the familiar scent of masala chai, just the way Samira likes it—which took Jack a few tries to get right but he's nothing if not motivated and willing to learn. Especially for her.

The mugs sit on the kitchen counter, steam rising from them, as Jack walks to the front door and opens it in time to see Samira making her way up the cobblestone path. "Hello, hello," she greets with a grin, curls dancing slightly in the breeze as she steps up to the front porch.

He mirrors her smile instantly at the sight of hers. She's out of her dress, replaced by an oversized Penn hoodie and leggings, her face free of makeup yet holding that pretty glow that she gets whenever she does her skincare routine. Jack has seen her do it enough times, in her bathroom and his own, to know each step by heart.

"Hi, honey," he says, his smile widening as she stops to kiss him. He takes her duffel bag from her hand as he leans into the kiss.

Samira hums as she pulls away, smiling up at him. "You made chai for me?"

"What can I say?" He shoots her a smirk as they walk into the house. "You trained me well."

Samira lets out a laugh while toeing off her shoes as he locks the door behind them, putting her bag on the couch before following her into

the kitchen. He nods to the one on the right, which has her preferred amount of sugar, and Samira grabs it before leaning back against the counter. “It was a beautiful reception,” she comments with a smile before taking a sip.

“It was,” Jack agrees as he takes his own mug, moving to lean against the counter next to her. “It was a nice night.”

Samira sips her drink before she looks ahead and muses, “It was, until I had a breakdown in the bathroom.”

Jack’s eyebrows pull together, turning his head to the right to look at her. “You didn’t have a breakdown.”

She shrugs. “A small one.” She holds up her index finger and thumb close together. When Jack’s expression remains frowning, Samira gives a quick half smile as her hand reaches out and her fingers smooth out the crease in his forehead, the touch making him smile a bit. She drops her hand with a sigh, tilting her head back, hands gripping her mug. “I don’t know why it hit me today. Keeping us a secret had been the plan from the beginning and I was fine with it—*am* fine with it. But tonight just—” She waves her hand with another huff, lips twisting to the side. Jack watches, patiently, as she looks down at her mug and lets out a breathy chuckle. “I just wanted to dance with you.”

Her words are a shy murmur and it quickens his pulse even as everything inside of him softens. But Jack’s chest squeezes with a primal sort of urge to give Samira everything she wants, and he pushes himself away from the counter. “Well—” He places his mug on the countertop before walking towards the bookshelf in the adjoining living room, glancing at Samira over his shoulder and seeing her already watching him. “I do recall promising you a dance.”

He sees her eyebrows rise as he turns to the shelf, fingers thoughtfully dancing over the various records that are lined up until he pauses on a song that reminds him of the woman in his kitchen.

Truthfully, all love songs now remind Jack of Samira, and he’d dance to all of them with her, if she’d let him.

Pulling out the record cover, Jack pulls out the vinyl and places it on the record player. It spins as the arm of the needle touches the record, a brief static sounding before the silence is decorated by *Waiting For A Girl Like You* by Foreigner. Not *too* slow of a song, but one with a nice, smooth tempo for them to sway to as he turns to look at Samira, who

is watching him with a stunning smile and shining eyes that make him weak in the knees.

But he owes his girl a dance, so he strides over and offers a hand with a flash of a smile that deepens Samira's own dimples in response, the beginning tune of the song crescendoing. She places her mug on the counter before taking his proffered hand, smaller and softer in his as he gently tugs her towards him. Their fronts are flush together, the music flowing around them as Jack interlaces their fingers together and brings them to a gentle sway.

"Not a bad song choice," she muses, eyes bright and smile knowing, if not a little shy.

She is one of the most confident, competent doctors he's met—if not, *the* most—and knowing that she gets like *this* because of *him* —a little bashful, a little demure—leaves Jack overcome with an intoxicating combination of pride and boyish giddiness. To know he's the reason for her pretty blush and sweet smiles is an honor.

"Seemed fitting," is his easy reply, grinning when the chorus is about to hit and he pulls away, their arms outstretched in front of them before he pulls her back in with a spin that has her hair flying and a laugh escaping her, better than any song he could have picked.

"You're such a charmer," she says with laughter in her voice, his hand settling to the small of her back. He can feel the heat of her skin even through the thick material of her hoodie.

Jack arches an eyebrow. "Are you figuring this out just now?"

She scoffs with a roll of her eyes. "They don't call me Slow-Mo for nothing."

His eyebrows furrow down in a glare—not towards her, but that stupid fucking nickname. He's going to kick Robby's ass for letting it go on as long as it did. "Samira—"

"I'm kidding," she says with a laugh, the sight of it easing some of his annoyance towards Robby. Just some. She squeezes his hand that's interlaced with his, her other at the back of his neck with fingers gently playing with his curls. "I always thought you were charming, Dr. Abbot," Samira continues, just a little teasing. "Just took me a while to do something about it."

He lifts his chin, that familiar warmth ever present as they continue to

move. “Any regrets?”

But her brown eyes are soft, like melted chocolate, as her smile turns a little gentle, a little fond. “Just that I didn’t realize it sooner,” she says before lifting a shoulder in a shrug. “But I also think we found each other when we were meant to, so I don’t have any complaints. Do you?”

“No,” is his instant, honest response. Her lips curve up. “We are who we are because of everything we went through to get to this point. I wouldn’t change any of it, no matter how long it took, knowing that I’d get to be here with you at the end of it all.”

Samira sucks in a breath at his words and for a split second, Jack worries he may have said too much, come on too strong. But then her eyes shine and her smile is downturned as though she’s trying not to let it spread too wide as she looks up at him with a kind of emotion that makes his pulse tachy.

The song begins to reach its end and Samira lets out a breath, shaking her head as she tells him quietly, “I want all of my dances to be with you.”

Jack’s throat is tight, easily reading the words unsaid as she unknowingly echoes the same sentiment he had been thinking earlier tonight during their conversation in the bathroom. He leans forward and presses a kiss to her forehead, feeling Samira melt in his arms at the touch. “They will be, for as long as you want.”

They keep swaying long after the song ends.

End Notes

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